

- ☛ **A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical symptoms:** This could indicate injury, the influence of drugs, or someone needing medical or psychiatric assistance.
- ☛ **Any person casually walking through a backyard:** They may have broken into your neighbor's home.
- ☛ **Any vehicle moving slowly without lights or following a course that appears aimless or repetitive in any location:** Particularly in areas of schools, parks, and playgrounds. Occupants may be looking for places to rob or burglarize. They also could be drug pushers or sex offenders.
- ☛ **Parked, occupied, vehicles containing one or more persons:** If it is an unusual hour they could be possible lookouts for a burglary in process.
- ☛ **Vehicles being loaded with valuables if parked in front of a closed business:** Or unattended residence, even if the vehicle is a legitimate looking commercial vehicle. More and more professional thieves are customizing vehicles with special signs to move more freely without suspicion.
- ☛ **Apparent business transactions conducted from a vehicle:** Especially around schools or parks. If juveniles are involved, it could mean a possible drug sale.
- ☛ **Persons being forced into vehicles:** Especially juveniles or females, may indicate possible kidnaping.
- ☛ **An abandoned vehicle parked on your block:** May be a stolen car.
- ☛ **Continuous repair operations at non-business locations:** Possibly stolen property is being stripped, repainted, or otherwise altered.
- ☛ **Open or broken doors or windows at a closed business or residence:** When owners are absent, could mean a burglary in progress or already completed.

- ☛ **A beam from a flashlight in a neighbor's home:** Especially if the residents are away.
- ☛ **Persons wearing or carrying bloody clothing:** Could be either a suspect or victim of a serious crime.
- ☛ **Persons making a quick change of vehicles:** May be attempting to elude the police or abandoning a stolen vehicle.

Some of the suspicious situations described may have logical and reasonable explanations and be completely, innocent activities. Regardless, the Montgomery County Police Department would rather investigate a crime-prone situation than be called when it is too late.

**Your call could save a life, prevent an injury or stop a criminal act. BE ALERT.**

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*Be a good neighbor...  
...Become Involved*

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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH SECTION  
301-840-2585**

**Rockville - 279-1591  
Bethesda - 652-9200  
Silver Spring - 565-7744  
Wheaton - 217-4400  
Germantown - 840-2650**

**EMERGENCY - DIAL 911**

**NON-EMERGENCY - DIAL 279-8000**

*Montgomery County, Maryland  
Department of Police*



# Reporting Suspicious Activities



**Emergency-911  
Non-Emergency-279-8000**

## WHAT IS MEANT BY "SUSPICIOUS"?

**S**uspicious can be any person, act, event, or situation that appears questionable. Anytime someone or something "just doesn't seem right to you" - that's when YOU should call the police.

The Montgomery County Department of Police cannot combat crime and function effectively without the assistance of responsible citizens. We are depending on you to call and report all suspicious persons or actions.

People often fail to call the police and report an incident simply because they are unaware of what seemingly innocent activities might be suspicious. Others notice suspicious events and hesitate to call for fear of being labeled a "nosy neighbor" or "crank". Others take it for granted that someone else has already called.

**CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY** if you observe any suspicious person, activity or situation. Do it yourself. Protecting citizens and their property is our job, so don't think you're bothering us. Do not worry about being "embarrassed" if your suspicions prove unfounded - instead - **THINK ABOUT WHAT COULD HAPPEN, IF YOU DO NOT ACT.**

## "INFORMATION MOST OFTEN NEEDED"

**W**hat happened? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Was anyone hurt?

**DESCRIPTION OF PERSONS:** (Include clothing). When observing or describing suspects, notice age, race, sex, height and weight. Compare your own weight and height with the suspect's. Pick out some *unique* characteristics (scars, nose, jewelry, etc.) That will help you identify the suspect in the future.

**DESCRIPTION OF VEHICLE:** License number, make, model, color, any noticeable damage and direction of travel.

## "SUSPICIOUS EVENTS TO WATCH FOR AND REPORT"

**B**asically, anything that seems even slightly "out of place" or occurs at an unusual time of day could be criminal activity. Some of the most obvious events to watch for and report include:

- ☛ Any stranger entering your neighbor's unoccupied house could be a burglar
- ☛ Offers of merchandise at ridiculously low prices is an indication of stolen property.
- ☛ Anyone peeking into parked vehicles may be considered stealing either a vehicle, the valuables inside, or both
- ☛ Persons entering or leaving a business establishment, school, or church after hours could be burglars.
- ☛ The sound of breaking glass or any loud explosive noise could mean an accident, burglary, or vandalism.
- ☛ Persons loitering around schools, parks, or secluded areas could be sex offenders.
- ☛ Non-residents of a neighborhood observed loitering could be burglars.

## "SUSPICIOUS EVENTS THAT APPEAR NORMAL"

**A**lthough most strangers entering your neighborhood are not criminals, you should still remain alert. There are many legitimate reasons for non-residents to be in your neighborhood. Letter carriers, repairmen, and door-to-door salespersons, are seen and accepted. Criminals are aware of this acceptance and often assume the guise of legitimate business representatives to burglarize homes and stores.

Check identification of all solicitors, meter readers, delivery persons, and repairmen prior to permitting entry into your home. Do not open the door. If in doubt call the company before letting anyone in, getting the number from telephone information, not from the person at the door. **Be suspicious** of an alleged delivery person with a wrong address or asking if someone else lives there. Some less obvious events to watch for are:

- ☛ **Someone Going Door-to-Door In Neighborhood**  
Watch for a short period of time. Take notice whether one or more persons tries a door to see if it is locked, peeks into windows, or enters a side or backyard. Any or all of these actions may indicate a possible burglar. Most suspicious is when one person enters a backyard of the house, while the other remains in the front or in a car a short distance away. **Call the Police Immediately.**  
**Do not wait until the person leaves.**

Never under any circumstances permit anyone to enter your home for the purpose of using the phone, regardless of how friendly, polite, etc.. If there is an emergency - offer to make the call for the party. Avoid the possibility of being robbed, beaten, and/or raped.

- ☛ **Human traffic to and from a certain residence:**  
It is not suspicious unless it occurs on a daily or very regular basis; especially during late or unusual hours. It could possibly be the scene of drug activities or a fence operation.
- ☛ **One or more juveniles walking casually throughout the neighborhood looking into automobiles, backyards, etc.**
- ☛ **Anyone forcing entrance to and/or tampering with a residence, business, or vehicle.**
- ☛ **A person running, especially if carrying something of value.**
- ☛ **Someone carrying property:**  
If it's an unusual hour or place, especially if the property is not wrapped as if just purchased.